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## XVII.—ANTOINE HEROËT'S *PARFAITE AMYE*.

Perhaps the most significant phenomenon of modern history is the emancipation of woman—the rise of the submerged half. No more interesting and no more complex problem can be dealt with, and it is well worthy of the attention which scholars have of late years been devoting to it.

There can be no doubt of the complete subjection of woman during the lawless Dark Ages and on during mediæval times, when the church pointed to her as the daughter of Eve, and the cause of the fall of man. Yet her position was not hopeless: Maryolatry<sup>1</sup> and the ideals of chivalry must each have been having their effects.

With the organization of fashionable society in the eleventh century we find *Madonna* already the adored heroine of the courtly lyric of Provence, and later Marie de Champagne is the literary patroness of Chrétien de Troyes. The pinnacle of the chivalrous conception of woman was to be Dante's transcendently spiritualized picture of Beatrice.

There was another side to the shield, however, and that other side is rendered by Jean de Meung. The second half of the *Roman de la Rose* presents no very ideal, no Dantesque view of the attitude of the mediæval man toward the woman of his day and generation. And one is apt to suspect, if one reads between the lines in many a polished courtly epic, that Jean de Meung is perhaps more nearly right than Dante—not as regards the character or potentialities of woman, but with respect to man's attitude towards her.

<sup>1</sup> V. W. A. R. Kerr, *Le Cercle d'Amour*, Publ. of the Mod. Lang. Ass., March, 1904, pp. 37 ff.

The cause of woman was only to be won—if it yet is—by a long fight. Even before the Renaissance, when the first great movement towards the freedom of the gentler sex was to take place, individual voices are heard protesting against the accepted cynical Ovidian slander of woman which had so long obtained. Christine de Pisan and the Chancellor Gerson of the University of Paris, who combatted so bravely against the Jean de Meung tradition, were both of them early woman's righters.<sup>1</sup>

With the advent of the Renaissance comes the remarkable phenomenon of platonism.<sup>2</sup> The gospel of the salvation of man by his love for the beauty of woman—that man by intellectual intercourse with a refined, cultured, and beautiful woman was to be regenerated and raised to harmony with the absolute beauty of God—that man was to see in woman a beauty which was but the pale reflection of celestial beauty and from a love of its earthly expression in woman was to mount to the contemplation of its heavenly original—this is one of the great thoughts of the Renaissance and one of the loftiest conceptions of all time.

The doctrine of platonism was first elaborated in Italy, and though the whole literature of the time is saturated with

<sup>1</sup> V. Christine de Pisan, *Epistre au Dieu d'Amours*, ed. Roy, 3 vols., Paris, 1896, vol. I, pp. 1 ff. V. also Gerson, *Opera*, 1706, III, p. 297. Cf. also G. Gröber, *Frauen im Mittelalter und die erste Frauenrechtlerin*, *Deutsche Rundschau*, Dec., 1902.

<sup>2</sup> Some recent studies in platonism are:

Abel Lefranc, "*Le Platonisme et la Littérature en France à l'Époque de la Renaissance*," *Rev. de l'Hist. Litt. de la France*, 1886, pp. 1 ff.

Maulde La Clavière, *Femmes de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1898.

Jefferson B. Fletcher, "*Précieuses at the Court of Charles I.*," *Journal of Comparative Literature*, April-June, 1903.

J. S. Harrison, *Platonism in English Poetry*, New York, 1903.

W. A. R. Kerr, "*Le Cercle d'Amour*," *Publications of the Mod. Lang. Ass.*, March, 1904, pp. 33 ff.

it, it is most powerfully preached by Cardinal Bembo and Castiglione.<sup>1</sup>

In Italy the battle was early won. Other countries were to follow more slowly. In France the centre of liberalism was Margaret of Navarre, the sister of Francis I. The daughter of an Italian mother, Louise of Savoy, she had had a humanist education and was open to all the new ideas of that agitated time. She was a pronounced platonist, as her writings bear witness,<sup>2</sup> and those about her became infected with her ideas. Even the light Clément Marot, who writes of his *Alliance de Pensée*, appears to have dallied with platonism—not really understanding it—as he coquetted with religious reform.<sup>3</sup>

There was, however, another man in Margaret's entourage who was possessed of a mind at once far subtler and far profounder than that of Marot, and whose literary work

<sup>1</sup> Statements and applications of platonism might be adduced from an endless number of Italian authors; the following are a few:

Benivieni, *Canzone, Amore, Opere*, Venice, 1522.

P. Bembo, *Asolani, Opere*, vol. I, Milan, 1808. The *Asolani* dialogues were published in 1505 with numerous later editions. They were translated into French in 1545 by J. Martin. Book III is devoted to a statement of platonism.

Baldassare Castiglione, *Il Cortegiano*, ed. Cian, Florence, 1894. The first edition appeared in 1528; many others followed. The book was translated into French in 1537 by Jacques Colin d'Auxerre; it was frequently reprinted. The final chapters (LXV seq.) of Book IV are a magnificent eulogy of platonism.

Michelangelo, Vittoria Colonna, Tullia of Aragon, Giuseppe Betussi, Cosimo Rucellai and numberless others all give expression again and again to platonist ideas.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Heptameron, *Nouvelle* 24; *Marguerites*, ed. Frank, vol. IV, *Mort et Résurrection D'Amour*; *Dernières Poésies*, ed. A. Lefranc, Paris, 1896, *Comédie Jouée au Mont Marson*. These examples might be added to indefinitely. Cf. also A. Lefranc, *Marguerite de Navarre et le Platonisme de la Renaissance*, Paris, 1897.

<sup>3</sup> Clément Marot, *Œuvres*, ed. Saint-Marc, vol. I, Rondeau xxxviii, p. 331, and Rondeau LI, p. 338, and vol. II, p. 32, Epigram Lxxxvi.

was to raise one of the most famous controversies of the century.

It was in fact the publication in 1542 of Heroët's *Parfaite Amye*, in thought and manner one of the most remarkable performances of the early French Renaissance, which precipitated the *Querelle des Femmes*. Heroët was answered next year by La Borderie with his *Amye de Cour*, in which love is reduced to coquetry. The reply to the *Amye de Cour* was Charles Fontaine's<sup>1</sup> *Contr' Amye de Cour*, in which the author sides with Heroët. The importance of the discussion may be judged when we remember that Rabelais was induced to break his eleven years' silence and in 1546 in the Third Book of *Pantagruel* at great length to deal with the woman question. That this is the real *raison d'être* of the great satirist's curious discussion as to whether or not Panurge shall marry has been pretty clearly shown by Professor Lefranc.<sup>2</sup>

Some examination then of the *Parfaite Amye*—but few copies of which now exist—the book which in France was the herald of modern ideas regarding the claims and rights of woman, may not be without value.

Antoine Heroët<sup>3</sup> was born in Paris in 1492, of a rather important family. The seigneurie *La Maison Neuve* be-

<sup>1</sup>Fontaine had a habit of taking up the cudgels on behalf of Cupid in distress: *Le Triomphe et la Victoire d'Argent contre Cupido*—Lyons, 1537—charged the ladies of Paris with yielding themselves rather for money than love, and Fontaine came to rescue of his fellow-townswomen with a gallant *Response*.

<sup>2</sup>Abel Lefranc, "*Le Tiers Livre du Pantagruel et la Querelle des Femmes*," *Revue des Études Rab.*, vol. II, nos. 1 and 2.

<sup>3</sup>For some details regarding Heroët and his family v. Lucien Grou, "*La Famille d'Antoine Heroët*," *Rev. de l'Hist. Litt.*, 1899, pp. 277 ff. Cf. also Lucien Grou, "*Nouveaux Documents sur Antoine et Louise Heroët*," *Bulletin de la Société de l'Histoire de Paris et de l'Ile de France*, 1899, pp. 88-94. The last-named bit of research contains a promise of another article on Heroët, but I have not been able to find it.

longed to his father. Heroët early entered the church, and with his court influence, for he was a protégé of Margaret of Navarre, he was rapidly promoted. He became prior of Saint-Eloi-lez-Longjumeau and in 1552 was raised to the episcopacy. He died in 1568, bishop of Digne.

Heroët was well known in his own day and apparently equally esteemed by both the literary factions, by the school of Marot as well as by the Pléiade.<sup>1</sup>

Heroët contributed some verses to the *Tombeau* of Louise de Savoie in 1531. Then in 1542 he published *La Parfaite Amye*; there are two editions bearing that date,—one printed in Lyons and one at Troyes, of which the former is probably the older; 1543 saw two more editions, one at Rouen and a second by Dolet at Lyons. Almost every year for a little time after this saw a new edition.

The Dolet volume contains three additional poems :

*L'Androgyne de Platon*—the nature of which is sufficiently indicated by the marginal note: "Cecy est prins du Livre de Platon intitulé Convivium, vel de Amore, en ung

<sup>1</sup> It is evident from Marot, ed. Saint-Marc, vol. II, p. 19, Epigram LIV, that Marot, Scève and Heroët were all teasing the same girl at court. Marot and Heroët were also the joint authors of a little Chanson—the latter writing the first couplet and Marot the second; v. Marot, vol. I, p. 424, Chanson XLI. In Marot's *Eclogue au Roy* of 1539, vol. I, p. 39, the playfully mentioned "Thony" is probably Antoine Heroët.

Rabelais mentions Heroët in the Prologue to Book V (ed. Des Marets et Rathery, vol. II, p. 322). The name, it is true, is spelt "Drouet," but it is altogether likely that it is, as is usually conjectured, a disfigurement of Heroët.

Ronsard mentions Heroët along with Scève and Saint-Gelais as being the honorable exceptions in his sweeping condemnation of pre-Pléiade poetry; v. Preface of 1550 to Book I of the "*Odes*," ed. Blanchemain, 8 vols., Paris, 1857, vol. II, p. 11.

Du Bellay refers to Heroët as an author whom his contemporaries were imitating; v. *Défense et Illustration*, Book I, chap. VIII.

Other contemporary allusions to Heroët could be adduced, but the mentions of him already made indicate that though he is almost a stranger to the twentieth century, he was recognized by the men of his own time.

passage dict Aristophanes laudatio." The *Androgyne* is followed by a short poem, entitled: *De n'aymer point sans estre aymé*. The last of the three, *La Complainte d'une Dame surprise nouvellement d'amour*, probably refers to Francis I. himself.

Besides the work already enumerated there are some bits by Heroët in a *Recueil* of 1547: *Opuscules d'Amour*; and doubtless if the libraries were carefully searched more productions from his pen could be found.

We may turn now to the *Parfaite Amye* itself. The poem, references to which will be to the Dolet edition of 1543, is put in the mouth of a married woman, "la Parfaite Amye"; her general effort is to justify the spiritual—"platonic"—love of a woman for a man other than her husband.

The *Parfaite Amye* looks upon her love as of heavenly origin; its strong root issues from the divine will:

". . . l'amytié, qui est du ciel venue  
Et que depuis i'ay fatalle tenue,  
M'appercevant, que sa forte racine  
Issue estoit de volonté divine." (p. 8.)

He who likes may call love sinful, but the *Parfaite Amye* boasts, not only is she happy with hers, but if her love had a divine beginning she has maintained it divine:

"Or semble amour, a qui voudra, peché,  
Puisque le ciel du mien s'est empesche:  
Non seulement de lui ie me contente:  
Mais davantage aux dames ie me vente  
Que si divin fut son commencement,  
Entretenu ie l'ay divinement." (p. 9.)

She prefers her affair to be secret—does not care to publish her relationship. But should it become known, she

would not try to hide it, nor attempt to cause the contrary to be believed.

She would remember that the vulgar had no judgment in such matters, that the blame of the crowd is really praise.

She does not fear the opinion of the "gens d'honneur," who have passed through her experience ; for, whether men or women, they will remember and forgive her :

"Quant est a moy : ie ne veux publier  
 Le noeud qui sceut ma volonté lyer :  
 Et me plaist bien couvert et incongneu.  
 Mais s'il estoit par fortune advenu  
 Que mon amour, tel qu'il est, fust notoire,  
 Sans aultre aymer, sans le faire descroire,  
 Je me vouldrois avec une prudence  
 Reconforter de telle congnoissance.  
 Et reiettant tous deshonneurs et honte,  
 Premièrement ferois estat, et compte,  
 Que la vulgaire et sottie multitude  
 N'a jugement, scavoir, ny certitude :  
 Et le sachant, s'elle trouvoit estrange,  
 L'estimerois ses blames a louenge.  
 Les gens d'honneur redoubter je ne puis,  
 Qui ont passé les destroits, ou ie suis :  
 Car si d'aymer vient tout honnesteté,  
 Et leur souvient de ce qu'ilz ont esté  
 Soit homme ou femme, ilz me pardonneront." (p. 15.)

The *Parfaite Amye* feels however that for a married woman to permit the attentions of another man is to put herself in an equivocal position. Her defence is the pure nature of this relationship. Suppose it is apparently a contravention of accepted matrimonial standards, yet if people only knew of her life and conduct they would admit in their hearts that she is right ; that is all she asks—the acquiescence of the conscience—in public, people may, for convention's sake, say what they like :

"Et m'esme ceulx qui me condamneront  
 De n'avoir saintement observé



Le droict d'aymer au mary reservé,  
 Quant ilz scauront ma vie et ma conduite,  
 Par une loy dedans leurs cueurs escripte  
 M'excuseront, quoi qu'ilz en vueillent dire  
 Tout a part soy : qui me debvra suffire :  
 Bien qu'ilz me soient en public ennemys." (p. 15.)

Admit, however, for the sake of argument, proceeds the *Parfaite Amye*, that virtue is vice and let all gallantry be banned, then if she be found still to permit it, the worth of her lover is her defence.

However, she concludes, let us set aside the laws and their harshness and reduce her case to equity :

"Mais confessons que la vertu soit vice,  
 Et bannissons tout amoureux service :  
 . . . . .  
 Laissons les lois et leur severité  
 Et reduisons ma cause a equité." (p. 16.)

Here follows the *Parfaite Amye's* statement of her own case and her plea for extra-matrimonial love :

If she serves one man by "cursed" chance, and by natural law is the mistress of the other ; if one is life to her, the other death ; if she love rightly, to which does she do wrong : to him who abuses her happiness or to him, who refuses to take advantage of her ?

"Si ie sers l'ung de mauldicte aventure,  
 Et ie commande a l'aulture de nature :  
 Si l'ung m'est vie, et l'aulture dure mort :  
 En bien ayment, auquel feray ie tort,  
 Ou a celluy qui de mon heur abuse,  
 Ou a celluy qui malgré moy refuse ?" (p. 16.)

Her lover she pities and always will :—

"Puisque l'amy, qui l'esprit possede,  
 Corps et beaulte de moy s'amyce cede," etc. (p. 17).

Some people tell her she must leave her lover, and so

outrage her nature ; another pictures to her the "honneste dame ;" a third hints she may be sinning against God ; still another urges her to think no more about it—as though love were a thing to be lightly taken up and set down :—

"Mais le mien est de lieu trop hault venu,  
Pour estre ainsi variable tenu." (p. 18.)

This love already alluded to as "heavenly," according to the *Parfaite Amye*, began in heaven before birth,<sup>1</sup> and now when the two souls in question meet and recognize each other here below, and conditions are favorable, their renewed love yields them a delight unspeakable, a comfort and joy which only the understanding can comprehend :<sup>2</sup>

"Quand deux esprits au ciel devant liés,  
Puis recongneus en terre et r'alliés,  
Trouvent les corps propices, et les sens  
Tous attentifz, serfz et obeissants,  
De mutuelle et telle affection,  
L'ung a de l'autre une fruïtion,  
Ung aise grand, certain contentement,  
Qui n'est congneu que de l'entendement." (p. 25.)

Although the happiness of this soul-communion is "indicible," the *Parfaite Amye* attempts a description of it :

"Bien vous diray ce que i'en imagine :  
Ceste union est fureur tresdivine,  
Dont les esprits quelque foyz agités  
Sentent l'odeur de tant de dëités  
Que revenuz de ce ravissement  
Laissent au corps ung esbahissement,  
Comme si l'heur a iamais fust perdu,  
Qu'on leur avoit pour peu d'heure rendu." (p. 25.)

<sup>1</sup> This idea is elaborated farther on, p. 37.

<sup>2</sup> Understanding (entendement) : the use of the word "entendement" indicates that the love under discussion is not of the senses, but intellectual. This is quite in accord with the accepted Renaissance platonic theories.

We are not to ask what this happiness is :

“Ne demandez quel heur : car qui l’a heu,  
 Oncques depuis redire ne l’a sceu.  
 Or s’il advient quelque foy<sup>1</sup> en la vie,  
 Que l’ame estant en tel estat ravie,  
 Les corps voisins comme morts delaissés,  
 D’amour et non d’aulture chose pressés,  
 Sans y penser se mettent a leur ayse,  
 Que la main touche, ou que la bouche baise.”<sup>2</sup> (p. 26.)

While the spiritual kiss here spoken of is not new, yet Heroët must have felt that it needed special defence, for regarding the kiss he proceeds :

“Cela n’est pas pour deshonneur compté  
 C’est un instinct de naïfve bonté,  
 Si ce pendant que les maistres iouyssent,  
 Les corps qui sont serviteurs s’eiouyssent :  
 . . . . .  
 Ny les esprits scauroient estre records  
 De ce qu’ont faict en absence les corps :  
 Ny le corps scait, ny langue signifie  
 L’heur qui l’esprit en terre deifie.” (p. 26.)

The argument is odd : that in the tranced absence of the

<sup>1</sup> foy?

<sup>2</sup> “La bouche baise :” We meet here the “platonic kiss,” that ecstatic “congiungimento d’anima” of which Castiglione writes in the *Cortegiano* (ed. Cian, Book IV, chap. LXIV).

Heroët’s own patroness, Margaret of Navarre, speaks also in the *Adieux*, one of her most interesting and apparently most sincere poems, of the platonic kiss :

“Adieu vous dy le baiser juste et saint  
 Fondé du tout en Dieu et charité.”

In the same poem Margaret refers also to the hand :

“Adieu la main laquelle j’ay touchée  
 Comme la plus parfaite en vraye foy,  
 Dans laquelle ay la mienne couchée  
 Sans offenser d’honnestete la loy.”

(*Dernières Poésies*, ed. Lefranc, Paris, 1896, p. 351.)

soul, the body which is merely the servant, enjoys itself, and on the former's return no record of the touch or kiss is found.

So ends Book I.

The second book of the *Parfaite Amye* has for its theme the situation which would be caused by the possible death of the lover. The various thoughts and feelings to which this gives rise lead to the expression by Heroët of many curious and interesting ideas.

Should her lover die the *Parfaite Amye* hopes she may be able to detach her spirit and so enter into some sort of mystical communion with his soul :

“Car mon esprit en sera séparé :  
Et au plus haut de sa tour retiré  
Vouldra trouver alluy que tant aimoy,  
L'esprit que tant en l'aymant i'estimois.  
Et pour aultant que de vertu muny  
Seroit reioinct en Dieu et rëuny,  
Et que d'atteindre a chose pure et nette  
On ne pourroit avecques l'imparfaict,  
Lairray l'esprit d'amour purifié  
Disioinct du corps et tout mortifié.” (p. 35.)

Then the *Parfaite Amye* with clarified spiritual vision beholds her lover beyond the veil :

“Ie le verray pour s'estre en Dieu fié  
Pur, simple et beau, saint et deifié :  
Et pour avoir heu foy et loyauté,  
Ie le voirray iouyssant de beaulté.” (p. 36.)

The mention of the word “beaulté” brings us to a very interesting passage, in which the *Parfaite Amye* recalls a speech about beauty that her lover had once made to her, but which she at the time did not understand :—

“Mes sens pour lors de terre trop chargés.” (p. 37.)

However, as she recalls her lover's words, she gives them :

"Il me souvient luy avoir ouy dire  
 Que la beaulté que nous voyons reluyre  
 Es corps humains, n'estoit qu'une estincelle  
 De ceste là qu'il nommoit immortelle :  
 Que ceste cy, bien qu'elle fust sortie  
 De la celeste, et d'elle une partie,  
 Si toutesfoys entre nous perissoit,  
 Si s'augmentoit, ou s'elle decroissoit,  
 Que l'autre estoit entiere et immobile." (p. 36.)

This is the Renaissance doctrine of beauty as interpreted by the cultured platonist exegetes of the Sixteenth Century, by Bembo, Castiglione, by Margaret of Navarre, to whose statements of platonism I have already referred.

A curious idea follows : that the death of her lover would so clarify the senses of the *Parfaite Amye* that the cloud which obscures knowledge would be dissipated :

"Sa seule mort leur osteroit la nue  
 Par laquelle est sapience incongneue." (p. 37.)

Heroët now proceeds to elaborate a very remarkable theory, that alluded to on p. 25. His idea is that our souls before being summoned to put on earthly bodies were engaged in heaven in the contemplation of divine beauty ; that after birth the memory of the previous state is practically lost, but that a remembrance of it is vouchsafed to those who here below love truly. Then the experience of love brings back to the lover a recollection of his former bliss, and with this standard of eternal beauty in mind, the lover is now able rightly to measure earthly beauty as a part and pattern of the beauty which pervades and transfuses the universe :

"Ce qu'il disoit apres ung grand plaisir,  
 Nous deux estants quelque foy de loisir,  
 Qu'avons esté devant que nous fussions,  
 Lors que beaulté divine congneussions  
 Depuis tombés en ces terrestres corps  
 Que nulz n'estoient de ce temps la records

Sinon bien peu, ausquelz estoit permis  
 De se nommer et estre vrays amys :  
 Et qui de belle amy plus devenoit  
 C'estoit celluy qui mieux se souvenoit  
 D'avoir au ciel auparavant esté  
 Contemplateur de divine beaulté.  
 Qu'amour icy nous donnoit soubvenance,  
 Le souvenir causoit l'intelligence  
 De la beaulté ca bas mal entendue,  
 Iusques au temps que l'aesle soit rendue,  
 Que nous avons tombants desempennée, etc." (p. 37.)

In the theory here put forward Heroët appears to go a step beyond his contemporaries who, basing themselves pretty squarely on the *Symposium*,<sup>1</sup> held only that the lover was insensibly raised by the contemplation of human beauty—and, especially to the Renaissance, as typified in a woman—to a comprehension of celestial beauty. Heroët, however, makes it clear that a spiritual love of woman may awaken recollection of a pre-natal experience of heavenly beauty, which then becoming our standard enables us to judge correctly the nature and meaning of that physical beauty with which we have fallen in love.

Heroët now attempts to account for the platonic lover's feelings—a mixture

"d'horreur et d'admiration" (p. 38.)—

on beholding his lady :

"Cela ne vient d'humaine affection,  
 Ny de la terre ainsi que nous pensons :  
 Il vient du ciel, dont nous reconnoissons  
 Ceste beaulté de femme estre sortie,  
 Et nous souvient de tout, partie :  
 Il nous souvient de la saison passée,  
 De la beaulté, qu'au ciel avons laissée." (p. 38.)

<sup>1</sup> Jowett, *Dialogues of Plato*, 5 vols., London, 1892, climax of speech of Socrates, vol. I, p. 580 ff.

This is the purest platonism : contact with a part of beauty is to remind the lover that the cause of his feelings is not of human origin ; but descends from heaven, which also is the source of woman's beauty.

Heroët hints at a conception of platonism as something akin to a social gospel, an idea we find in Margaret of Navarre,<sup>1</sup> who seems for a time at least to have looked upon platonism as a lever by which woman might exert a refining influence over man :

“ Nostre ame crainct, qu'estant au corps liée,  
Par son oubly du beau soit oubliée.  
Puis tout soubdain par sa reconnoissance  
Elle s'asseure et entre en esperance,  
Puisque d'ung tel souvenir est saysie,  
Que beaulté l'a préseleue et choisie,  
A s'eslever, si commence d'entendre  
Combien de perte elle feist de descendre :  
Veult refrener toutes passions vaines  
Use d'amour et de beaultés humaines  
Pour ung degré propre a plus haulte attente.  
Ainsi (disoit) l'ame au corps est contente.” (p. 39.)

According to Heroët, then, the soul, recognizing in its earthly love an echo of the divine, feels—and this is a nice neoplatonic touch—that beauty has predestinated and chosen it ; so the lover, feeling his “ calling and election sure,” tries to curb his passions, purify his life, and by the proper use of earthly beauty to attain to higher things.

Heroët, who apparently borrows the legend from Bembo,<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Les Adieux, Dernières Poésies*, ed. Lefranc, p. 352, where Margaret speaks of allowing a man's attentions with the object of doing him good :

“ Vous faisiez tant semblant de bien m'entendre  
Que je me mis de propos en propos  
A vous hanter, esperant bon vous rendre.”

<sup>2</sup> Pietro Bembo, *Opere*, 12 vols., Milan, 1808, vol. I, *Asolani*, p. 252-p. 254.

tells the story of the Queen of the Fortunate Isles. When travellers visited her dominions, they were put to sleep; if they dreamt of the beauty of the Queen they remained as welcome guests. If they dreamed of anything else they were dismissed :

“Brief des dormeurs nul en l’Isle retient,  
Sinon celluy, quand esveill   revient,  
Qui a song   de la grande beault   d’elle :  
Tant de plaisir    d’estre, et sembler belle,  
Que tel songeur en l’Isle est bien venu.” (p. 44.)

The final note of Book II is that of the future bliss of the lovers when reunited in heaven, in enjoyment of that beauty towards which their present love is but a desire :

“Si suis ie bien des ceste heure certaine,  
Que reschappez de la prison mondaine  
Irons au lieu, qu’avons tant estim    
Trouver le bien, qu’avons le plus aym   :  
C’est de beault   iouyssance et plaisir,  
Dont nostre amour est ung ardent desir.” (p. 44.)

The word “reschappez” emphasizes again the idea of the pre-natal life, which we have already noticed.

Book III of the *Parfaite Amye*, which is devoted to a somewhat general advocacy of love, is less interesting than the first two parts. The following is a brief r  sum   of the contents of the Third Book :

It is the duty of all men to sacrifice to love (p. 47.); love is to be looked upon as the best earthly gift we possess (p. 49.); if a suitable lover present himself and “volunt   mue de jugement” approve, he should be accepted (p. 49.); love is the best balm for the ills of life (p. 49 *bis.*); the greatest knowledge in this world is self-knowledge, and this is best gained by the close observation of another, the opportunity for which is given by love (p. 52.); love is the great



beautifier, and while it will not change a brunette to a blonde, it will transform a woman's appearance (p. 54.); as love keeps the mind calm it actually improves physical well-being (p. 55.). In a very interesting passage Heroët repudiates not only Petrarchism but Petrarch. This points to the fact that Heroët was quite aware how essentially different was the love he was preaching from that sung by Petrarch and his Renaissance imitators (p. 58.). If love yields such happiness, why is it that so many tragedies have marred its course? Heroët's answer is that very few people are born to love; the others do it by imitation and the results are disastrous (p. 59.).

The poem closes with the *Parfaite Amye's* advice to trust love :—

“Laissez luy en tout le gouvernement,  
Et s'il ne faict bien et heureusement  
Vivre chascune en ses amours contente,  
Ne m'appellez iamais parfaicte amante.” (p. 63.)

What then are the chief points in the argument of the *Parfaite Amye*?

Heroët asks for the married woman liberty to love purely a man other than her husband. Admitting the equivocal appearance of the relationship he would prefer it to be kept secret; but should the matter become public all that is actually necessary is that people who really understand a woman's position should in their consciences approve of her conduct. People may tell a woman to dismiss her lover for appearance' sake: but, says Heroët, love is not a thing to be thus easily taken up and laid down. True love on earth is but the renewal of a spiritual communion enjoyed previously before birth in heaven. The culminating peak of this renewed love is the ecstasy of the platonic kiss, an intellectual exaltation which cannot be described. This love clarifies knowledge, elevates the character, acts upon a man like

a moral tonic. True love is a desire towards true beauty, and as Beauty is but another name for God, love is a desire for God. This intellectual love, says Heroët, is to be totally differentiated from the so-called chaste wailings of Petrarch and his imitators. That in practice so many extra-matrimonial love-affairs go wrong is owing, not to the fault of platonic love, but to the fact that but the elect few are capable of entertaining it.

How far is Heroët to be taken seriously?

It is to be remembered that marriage was in his day—as it still largely is in France—a matter of convenience. Heroët and many others saw in platonism an opportunity for the affectionate side of a woman's nature to express itself. He also apparently looked upon this spiritual bond between the sexes as a chance for woman to improve and uplift the man who rendered her this intellectualized homage. The example of a number of his distinguished contemporaries encouraged his belief. And while he sees and confesses the practical and conventional difficulties inherent in the situation, Heroët claims that the frequent shipwrecks that occur are due to the fact that this intellectual love, emancipated from the dominion of sense, is only for the few.

Doubtless by the few in some form or other it has been practised in all ages.

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